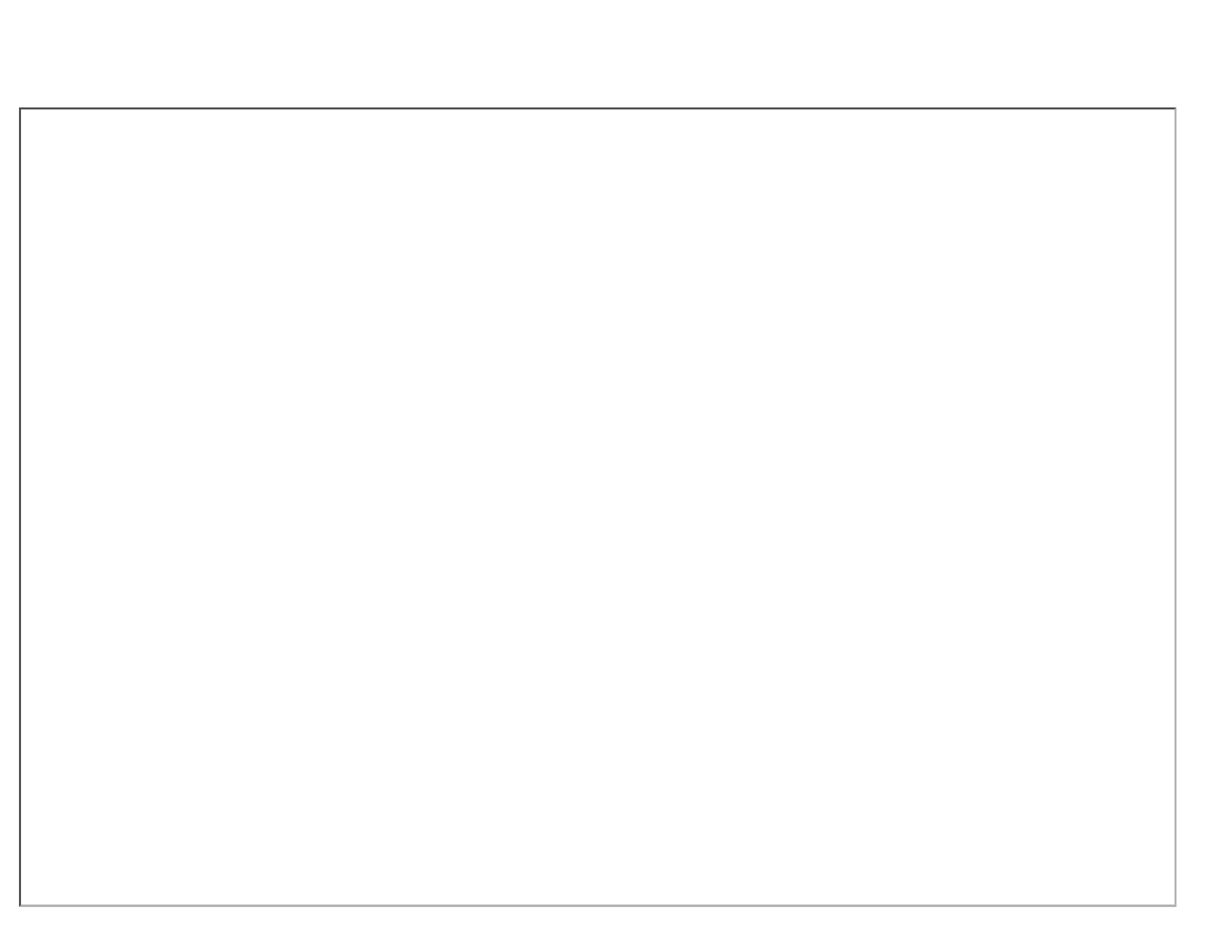






ACHIM SZEPANSKI 2024-03-22

# RAN SLAVIN – OOLONG: AMBIENT WORKS

NONMUSIC AMBIENT, MILLE PLATEAUX, ULTRABLACK OF MUSIC

Oolong: Ambient Works is the 17th studio album from multi disciplinary artist Ran Slavin. A 74 min drone-ambient-minimal-symphonic infused LP that takes after various tea's in the far east. Each track is accompanied by a slow and atmospheric visual journey shot by RS in East Asia and the total can be experienced in total and joined as an immersive 74 minute journey.

It is the second release of Ran Slavin on Mille Plateaux after his CD/DVD Insomniac City in 2006 where the city is continuously alive, in an animalistic-inorganic way, as Guattari puts it.

Oolong (Wu-lung) tea originates from China and is actually transliterated from two words meaning "black" and "dragon" in English. Besides its inherent meaning, the two words

describe the shape of the oolong leaves in their novel state. Oolong tea goes through a unique semi-oxidization process that ranges from 1% – 99%.

The immersive tea-walk in Zen radiates an infinity. It is an art of the path. The tea path is first and foremost a drama of water, but each place in Slavins journey represents a whole in itself. Everything in the cosmos is like the cosmos itself. Slavin's tea path functions by adopting processes of neighboring art genres such as video, painting photography and sound.

Slavin's Oolong dissolves the environment into a blend of ambiences. The music integrates synthetic textures into a patch-worked concrete soundscape brimming with sonic harmonics, micro-sounds, interferences and designed noise. Slavins music is about catching the world's alienness while reinventing the relation between materiality and the immaterial, the concrete and the abstract, and also between the terrestrial and the extra-terrestrial dimension, what sounds to be here and what seems to be there.

The formal restriction to the audiovisual means of expression is similar to the minimalist concept of tea architecture. As an overall work of art, the tea path correlates to and anticipates the cinematic processes of shot, slow motion and montage. The tea path is the art of matter, body and spirit. Its not only about the glitchy ambient sound, but also about the dimension of cinematic production, in which one works with tools such as film material, camera, microphone, lighting, editing equipment and so on. The visibility leads to a comparative discourse with the sound of the movie. It is easy to recognize that the film and the tea path operate with a similar system of selective sounds. The ambient works in Oolong are not merely a signal but represent an ambiguous flow of signs with rich qualities. It is impossible to know exactly what the individual sounds signify. Sometimes it might be the intention to hear the sounds of nature. But its not a question of identifying its source and its effect. These acoustic phenomena have their subtle gradations and nuances that correspond to the vitality of the visual texture of things. Sometimes the sound refers to a traceable source, sometimes it refers to no definable source. The film acoustics, which are virtually generated have a metaphorical character comparable to the soundscape of the tea path. Not only the centripetal, but also the centrifugal orientation of the sound is imaginary. Slavins journey creates an artificial, abstract soundscape that deviates from the everyday perception of the sound environment. A microcosm and the cosmos opens up and reverses the relationship between the finite and the infinite.

(Achim Szepanski)

you can order here: https://forceincmilleplateaux.bandcamp.com/album/oolong-ambient-works

you can watch videos here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVcdRNcpBwc

Stream it here: .

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